

through trade, will redound to our economic benefit as well as to our sense of national comity with our neighbors in the hemisphere.

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, I thank my colleague who has been such a leader on this issue.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BURNS). The Senator from Massachusetts.

PROVISIONS IN THE OMNIBUS APPROPRIATIONS BILL

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I expect that before long we will have the opportunity to get into the discussion of the omnibus proposal that has been referred to earlier this evening. I want to just bring some matters in the omnibus bill to the attention of our colleagues in the Senate and also to those in our country who are interested in where we are going to end up in the education provisions of this budget, and to also speak briefly about where we will be on the questions of health care as well.

In this omnibus proposal, as we said—it has been mentioned here—it is really a question of priorities and choices. What we are going to see is real cuts in the Head Start Program. It is a program that is a lifeline for millions of our children to help prepare them to enter grades K-12.

We have strengthened the quality of Head Start Programs in recent years, but we are going to see a real cut in the Head Start Programs under this budget. It is not even going to keep up to the current services. What we are going to see is a real loss to thousands and thousands of children across this country.

The most important programs we have in terms of educational achievement and accomplishment are the afterschool programs that make such a difference to children who may be falling behind, to help assist them to keep up with their classmates, and to also give them the help and assistance that makes a very important difference in terms of their own achievement and accomplishment.

This program is vastly oversubscribed. It is one of the most oversubscribed programs that we have in our educational arsenal. The reason it is oversubscribed is because it has had such success in helping and assisting needy children in our country. That program is going to be further cut under this proposal.

One of the key aspects of the No Child Left Behind was a recognition that what we needed in our schools across the country were smaller class sizes, well-trained teachers, curriculum reform, parental involvement, and afterschool programs. But one of the things we needed was going to be well-trained teachers. We made a commitment in the No Child Left Behind Program that we were going to enhance the teacher quality for the high schools in our country. That program is going

to be cut in terms of teacher quality in upgrading the skills of teachers in our high schools.

Our vocational educational programs, which are so important in permitting young people to acquire skills to be able to compete in an increasingly complex economy, those programs for vocational education are going to be cut.

As well, some 28 percent of the technology educational funding for programs that are in our schools to help our young people develop the insight into the new kinds of technologies which are so important for them to be able to succeed in their own education and to carry on their education will be cut.

Finally, the Pell grant remains at \$4,050 for the fourth consecutive year, while we have seen public college tuition has gone up more than 35 percent over the last 4 years. This is going to mean that tens of thousands—hundreds of thousands—of young students, who have the ability to be able to go on to college, will be denied that opportunity because the Pell grant is falling further and further behind.

If we are talking about an education budget, this is not the education budget.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. President, I want to make a brief comment, as well, on the health care crisis that we are facing. I think all of us understand the explosion of health care costs, the increasing number of the uninsured that exists in our society.

We know we passed a Medicare bill for prescription drugs that was more help and assistance to the pharmaceutical industry and the HMOs than it was to our senior citizens.

But it has been against that background, if we look at where we are in terms of the health care budget in this proposal, we have cut a quarter of a billion dollars in real terms from NIH.

Mr. President, this is the age of the life sciences. This is the age of the life sciences, with the human genome project, the increasing opportunities we are going to have with stem cell research, other types of research. We know the extraordinary progress we made out at NIH. We have the real possibilities of breakthroughs in so many different areas of health. If we were to solve the problems of Alzheimer's, we would empty two-thirds of the nursing home beds in my own State of Massachusetts. We are seeing a reduction in the NIH.

We have seen that the support for bioterrorism readiness in our Nation's hospitals is going to have a significant cut. The recruitment for the National Health Service Corps is cut by a third. That is a program that serves the underserved communities of this country. And the Office of Minority Health is cut by 10 percent.

Mr. President, the list goes on. Those who are strongly committed to having opportunities in education and also op-

portunities in the health care field recognize this budget really does not address the needs and the opportunities we have in these areas. I will have an opportunity to get into greater detail at another time about these underfunded programs on this particular proposal.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

OMNIBUS APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I know the last several hours have been difficult hours. A lot of people have been wondering exactly what is going on with the Omnibus bill, which people expect to vote on later tonight, which we will be voting on shortly. We will lay out the unanimous consent request in a few moments.

The language we have been talking about over the last 2, 2½ hours—I will refer to it as the Istook language—everybody agrees should not be in the underlying Omnibus bill. It was brought to people's attention when staff had looked at it late this afternoon, and everybody agrees it should not be in there.

The challenge we have had, from a procedural standpoint, is that the House has passed the Omnibus bill with that in it. Now we are to address it, and both Members of the House, including the Speaker, whom I have talked to directly, and our colleagues say it should not be there.

Procedurally, how do we accomplish that? Once we pass this bill, it would become the law of the land. It should not be there, but it would be there for a period of time. The potential for abuse would exist.

Mutually, we have agreed the only way to eliminate that is to send a correcting enrollment resolution back to the House of Representatives. The problem is they are not there. What we will do shortly—it will be in the UC—is we will pass that resolution, send it to the House. The House will receive that most likely on Wednesday. We also tonight will pass a continuing resolution, which we will comment on shortly, to allow business to continue tonight; and we will address the Omnibus and will vote on the Omnibus bill tonight and hopefully pass that bill. That bill will be sent to the desk, and it will be held there until the House acts, which will likely be Wednesday. At that point, and not until that point, this bill will actually be sent to the House or actually become law. Thus, there will be no window where this clause, this Istook language, will be law. It will not pass until it has been corrected in the bill, taken out of the underlying Omnibus bill.